

PROMPT COPY

"THE DIPLOMA"

SETTING

Stoop - 6 steps from street
to doorway
doorway - opens onstage
window - 3/4 open

STAGE PROPS

red cushion for window sill;
funeral wreath with black
ribbon for doorway;
window shade (to be used only on
curtain rise, till
1st appearance of Mother)

EXITS AND ENTRANCES

upstage left
downstage left
downstage right
upstage center left (doorway)

CHARACTERS

BRUNETTE

faded dungarees
black sweatshirt
scuffed sneakers
short, mannish bob
little makeup

BLONDE

faded dungarees
white sweatshirt
scuffed sneakers
long, blonde pony tail
skilful use of makeup

stage right on stoop
always gives scene to Brunette

stage left on stoop

Blonde is sitting on one of the lower steps; Brunette, on the second from the top. A match is struck.

Both are smoking at certain rise-manner in which cigarette is held reveals temperament. Brunette is more masculine-looking, clumsier, more careless in her appearance.

② Brunette has been sitting quietly with chin in her hands, and only when she renders "pfft!" does she make her first motion, a shrug of the shoulders.

Neither looks at audience, or at each other, but rather at the wreath.

③ Blonde is resting chin on crossed forearms, turns head from downy, towards stage left.

④ turns head stage right

⑤ Blonde, in a this-is-the-way-it's-done attitude, uses her hands to indicate same.

⑥ Shoulder movement

① BLONDE's opening is sort of a forced musing. She needs some conversational tidbit, so she discusses Gonzalez, recently dead.

② BRUNETTE; immediately, the audience should be aware that the Brunette "wonders" at a lot of things. A puckered expression over her eyebrows should be evident thruout play. This particular bit should be slow - she's defining what "perfection" in a man of his race is supposed to be.

③ Brunette:

③ BLONDE: very matter-of-factly

④ BRUNETTE: asks rhetorical questions thruout. Don't make them seem naive.

⑤ emphasize live, then, our

⑥ Brunette isn't easily satisfied with past answers. Blonde evidently thought subject was dropped.

BLONDE:

① It's a real shame that Mr. Gonzales had to die.
You know--he was actually good to his family. He didn't take dope like all the others. And he was a Democrat, too.

BRUNETTE:

② I wonder why he died. He was such a perfect man, savin' his money 'n not beating his wife--meek and humble. It seems so strange--he went to church every Sunday, took good care of his kids, and yet, just when he was ready to make himself a place here, ~~just~~!

BLONDE:

③ You come and go.

BRUNETTE:

④ I don't have a family to take care of. Why didn't I die?

BLONDE:

⑤ You have to live for something first. Then you die. Like we've just graduated high school.
It's now our time to live.

BRUNETTE:

⑥ How?

① Curtain - darkness

② Match struck

③ Spotlight on wreath

A Sounds of wailing and lament

④ Fade-in lights on Blonde and Brunette

⑤ Spotlight dims on wreath

① Looks directly at Brunette momentarily, then straight ahead.

③ on saying, "we're out of school," stretches her legs. Stands, slowly retreats behind railing. Does not turn into clones but faces downstage left.

④ cuts in quick with line; draws out "real"

⑤ when saying "out there" spread arms to encompass whole area toward downstage left

⑥ cuts in again
staccato tempo in these lines

① Obviously annoyed

② Disregards Blonde's annoyance

③ Complete lack of understanding of Brunette's line of questioning.

⑤ if Know-how-it's-going-to-be-attitude

⑥ her "where's out there?" should be said as if a new idea had presented itself for the first time, and she wants to say it before it passes her by.

"There must, etc. - trying to convince herself of this, altho' she really doesn't believe it and knows she doesn't

BLONDE:

① How what?

BRUNETTE:

② How're we going to live? I mean, we're out of school. What'll we do now?

BLONDE:

③ WHY, THERE's limitless things one can do. You could model, or be an actress, or...

BRUNETTE:

④ But is that any real way to live?

BLONDE:

⑤ Of course. You'll get married in a few years, and maybe someday you'll own this house... that's one way; or you could go out there and make barrels of money and meet...

BRUNETTE:

⑥ Where's out there? I mean, why're we here when there's an out there. There must be only one real way to live, and it couldn't be anywhere else, could it? You're wrong. No place is much different from here.

⑥ Full spotlight on figures.

① at conclusion of lines, should have a self-satisfied, smug look on her face. Sits down on ash can, looking rigidly in front of her.

② Fierceness of first line should show in facial and body movements. Puts face in hands after finishing lines

③ Mother is almost a Dickens caricature, with little humanity other than a hint of an Irish brogue. She appears at window quite suddenly - like a jock-in-the-box - in an old housecoat with a bandanna around her head and a darning in her hands. She leans on red cushion, talking fussily to the Brunette. She shares scene with Brunette.

④ Bows head for "I'm sorry..." but brings it up quick for remaining lines.

⑤ motions with dishrag

① Blonde is type who can regurgitate anything she hears and pass it off as her own - including ideas as well as forms of expression! Her lines almost sound as tho' they're straight from a soap opera.

② After strength of first line, the second should be breathy, showing a sharp contrast between firmness and indecision.

③ Where ye be is not really a question, because she can see Brunette right in front of her eyes, it's more of an accusation.

④ There is no bitterness nor cynicism in these lines, nor the extreme, naive. Again, it's that probing curiosity, search for the truth, or whatever you would want to call it.

Last line is not a boast, but just a piece of logic.

⑤ Mother has been listening to too many sermons.

BLONDE:

Don't you know that out there it's not the same?

Where have you been all these years? Here isn't

all the world. You have to cross many bridges

before you really see everything. I've been

around!

BRUNETTE:

I want to live the best way I possibly can.

Only, who's to tell me which is the best way?

MOTHER:

Where ye be, daughter? Heavens, child, what right

have you to be sitting there with a dead mon in

the house. Have ye no respect?

BRUNETTE:

I'm sorry...but I don't understand. How can you

give respect to someone who's dead? Shouldn't I

be respected? I'm the one that's alive.

MOTHER:

My goodness, child. You talk like one with no

sense. Don't you know that ye're supposed to

live a good life so as you'll die the right

way.

⑦ Spotlight narrows
to Brunette.

⑧ Spotlight on
Mother at window.
B. Sounds of wailing
and lament

① Looks inward on mention of Mr. Gonzalez, pauses, then continues line.

Whenever Brunette stumbles upon a new idea she doesn't want to lose, her hands should demonstrate the grasping motion.

② "If you were inside..." - looks inward and waves her arm in that direction.

③ on "give up my life" she moves up to top step. She flings back her head and extends her arms. She has pushed herself up to the top step.

⑤ is perfectly poised while saying these lines, looking slightly upward

① Again, there is that persistence to follow up a train of thought. "Maybe," etc - another new idea Brunette tries to keep hold of

② disgusted attitude, pulls rank

③ "Yes, mother" - resigned tone of voice, remaining lines are of a Joan of Arc quality - burning and hurting. She is beginning to know that what she does will be different from what the Blonde or anyone else does.

④ Should be said with almost a touch of fear in the admonition.

⑤ Disregards mother, goes on speaking as if she were far away

BRUNETTE:

But I thought it was the livin' that was important. What was wrong with Mr. Gonzales? He didn't die right somehow. Maybe he didn't take advantage of his chances.

⑨ Spotlight on
wreath
C. Sounds of wailing
and lament

MOTHER:

What'ever are you talking about? Who ^{have} you been getting those crazy ideas from? If you were inside doing your work, you wouldn't think so much. I'll do enough thinking for the both of us. Besides, you c'n stop vacationing pretty soon, and go to work. You're no prima donna, you know.

⑩ Spotlight ^{dims} on
wreath. 1

BRUNETTE:

Yes, mother. ..You know what I'd like. I'd like to give up my life to something...

MOTHER:

That's nonsense.

BRUNETTE:

If we were living at another time, I could have been a martyr. Then my life would have been worth something, and people would turn around and look at me.

- ① Warmth in tone for first time, throat passage - then abruptly - she hardens tone for last line and disappears.

Stands abruptly, turns downstage left.

- ② "why not buy" - looks down at her own clothes, fixes her hair, brushes speck of dust from jeans.

- ① First, and only human tone ever used by mother. You believe that perhaps there is some understanding behind that harsh exterior, but suddenly you are brought back to earth with the last line.

- ② Blonde. Thinks Brunette comes out with silly ideas sometimes.

- ③ She knows she is being boringly repetitive with her pointed questions.

- ④ Sits again, facing straight ahead

- ⑤ on first "what is it" stretches arm upwards as far as they can go while in sitting position.

- ⑥ Priest, garbed in red chasuble, mitre and crown, walks downstage left while talking, stopping two feet left of step where Brunette is sitting. Scene is played in profile.

- ④ Says "Then what," mockingly. Then, in exasperated tone, completes line

- ⑤ Pain, ^{anguish} etched in her voice, as she attempts to answer ^{to} herself, rather than answer to Blonde's question.

- ⑥ Sudden, dramatic (should not be walking in downstage until after he speaks first time.)

MOTHER:

Child, don't be getting stardust before yur eyes.

You belong here. What would ye be doin' someplace

different. You dedicate yourself to me and your

brothers and sisters and you'll be all right.

And now, hurry up in and do your cheres.

BLONDE:

Martyr? Why in heavens name would you want to

be a martyr? Why not buy yourself some pretty

clothes and then marry the first interesting

guy that comes along. That's what people do

nowadays.

BRUNETTE:

Then what?

BLONDE:

Then what. What are you looking for?

BRUNETTE:

What am I looking for? I want something. I know

that. Something more than just existence. But

what is it...what is it...

PRIEST:

God.

⑪ Spotlight dims
on Mother

⑫ Spotlight on
Blonde & Brunette

⑬ Light dims on
Blonde, narrows
on Brunette.

⑭ Spotlight on Priest,
upstage left.
D. Music for Priest

① Startled. While switching her position to face him, she speaks. There is anticipation in her demeanor.

② When Priest speaks, every accompanying motion is slow and solemn, as tho' he were saying the Mass, and his movements were sacred, curved approach "Mr. Gonzalez" - raises eyes, gestures toward doorway.

④ "Yes" is spoken very quietly, almost inaudibly, as if Priest were meditating. On snapping out of it, his movements which had momentarily stilled, again are active - but still slow, altho they get more rapid as scene progresses.

⑤ Stares back at Priest in first line. Then looks away, straight at audience, becomes animated.

① For a split second after she hears the Priest's intonation, she sits rigid, and then only turns.

② He speaks superciliously, as from the pulpit, but speech is choppy.

③ Said in confused, contradictory way, in staccato tempo, which reveals inner confusion.

④ Priest was almost caught meditating on his replies, so when he continues, he is on the defensive, throwing questions at her to give himself time to regain his balance.

⑤ First line is said quietly. Then a brief pause. Remaining lines have unmistakable note of idealistic romanticism. However, it is just one desperate line thrown out, with no real hope of success.

BRUNETTE:

① What?

PRIEST:

You're obviously looking for God. But why? God has given you life. [Mr. Gonzales in there is dead and you have life. What are you questioning? Be happy, child. You are very lucky

⑮ Spotlight on wreath
E. Sounds of wailing and lament.

BRUNETTE:

Am I lucky? I thought maybe I wasn't happy, but I guess I am--or at least I should be. But I believe in God. Doesn't everybody? I mean, you have to have something to believe in, don't you?

⑯ Dim spotlight on wreath.

PRIEST:

Yes. Young woman, you think too much. Do you know your place? Everyone has a place. You have yours and I have mine. Isn't that simple?

BRUNETTE:

I guess I just haven't given in to my place yet. Couldn't I be a missionary nun in Africa and convert thousands of natives. Maybe I have the call.

① "safe within these walls" - he extends his arms to encompass the area moves in to cover her, as a cross, then begins slowly to back away. He lifts her up thru the power of his hands, chanting "come with me." She is half-standing.

② He has lifted her up thru the power of his hands, but she visibly fights against this drawing power, struggling violently, as if within herself.

③ Priest has back off platform to exit downstage left, where he stands perfectly still with his arms raised, and while speaking lines, makes the sign of the cross.

④ The struggle over, she sits back exhausted. Faces audience. Profile toward window. Brunette

⑤ Motherly tone. [Brunette, turning away from Priest, begins withdrawing.

① He is somewhat taken aback by her proposal, checks himself, again returns to his impersonal preaching. She begins shaking her head no.

② A puzzled hysteria infuses these lines with the idea that there is a strong argument in favor of religion, but it is too easy to give in to; if she is to be true to herself she cannot give in.

③ Completely didactic.

④ Still with tremor in her voice from the struggle, she says this line quite simply.

⑤ Chatters, rather than speaks, lines. It's all-for-the-best-attitude.

PRIEST:

Now you don't have to go to that extreme. If you think you have the call, come with me. The parish will be your home. You won't ever have to leave here. God will listen to your prayers for the African natives, I'm sure. You will have a beautiful life--devoting yourself to God, safe within these walls...come with me.

F. a. Music becomes louder.

b. Thunder: flash of lightning
c. Colored lights play about set.

BRUNETTE:

No, no...your offer...I cannot accept your offer...

how can one devote oneself to something he cannot understand...I want to know what my life will be...

PRIEST:

You are to know, love and serve God in this world and be forever with Him in the next.

(17) Spotlight dims on Priest, down left.
G. Sound ceases

BRUNETTE:

I wonder if Heaven is like out there.

MOTHER:

A'm glad to see that you weren't fool enough to run off to the nunnery. There's no sense in doin' too much for the church. They're like to

(18) Spotlight on Mother at window

③ cont.

"That's what's writ." - shakes her head in affirmation.

① Goes into herself again - withdrawing
Technique of pulling herself
into a cocoon like state.

② Waves arms wildly, and
demonstratively.

③ Blonde should carelessly stretch
herself to relax the scene.
Rises slowly, turning to face
Brunette.

④ Brunette unwinds, turning
1/4 left to audience.

① Wondering, musing quality.
Her curiosity underlies this
wonder.

② Firmness, born of
controlled anger.

"hurry in to do" slurred, because she
wants to hurry away from window
before she loses her temper.

③ Blonde has very necessary
job of bringing scene into a
lighter perspective, and pulling
Brunette out of her reverie.
Her lines should be airily spoken.

④ Awakened from her reverie.

⑤ Continued airiness.

get used to it. You just say ye're prayers and listen to his sermons and stay at 'ome with me.

③ When you get old, you're wanting your children to relieve the burden of the years. That's whats writ.

BRUNETTE:

Oh,...I guess I owe you my life, then--and my
① living so far. Do I ever owe anything to myself, though. Does my life really count.

MOTHER:

Yer raving again. You belong to me, and yer
② daughter, when you have one, will belong to you. And now, hurry in to do yer chores.

BLONDE:

③ Your mother certainly has both feet on the ground--but your father sure had wings.

BRUNETTE:

④ What was that?

BLONDE:

⑤ Every family has a father. That's the way they do it nowadays. What happened to yours?

①⑧ Spotlight dims on
Mother, upon
Blonde

① Chin in hands.

② Motions head, as tho' she didn't hear the first time.

③ Does not speak directly to Blonde, but to the audience.

④ Sits on ash-can abruptly

⑤ Stands abruptly, rigid.

⑥ Politician enters with derby, cane and cigar from downstage right, wearing a grey pin-stripe. He also wears a false smile during the whole time he is on stage. During ⑥ + ⑦ he moves to a position wherein he is standing in front of steps facing Brunette, in bet. (curved approach) Blonde and Brunette as far as sight lines are concerned.

He is carrying leaflets. ~~Plays~~ faces Brunette directly

⑦ Still facing Brunette

① Still as tho' in daze, rather matter-of-factly.

③ Offered as in explanation.

⑦ In awe.

⑧ Condescending attitude.

④ Awed monotone.

BRUNETTE:

① He had instability.

BLONDE:

② Who?

BRUNETTE:

My mother says he had instability. She says

③ it's a sin. I never knew him. He left this life
and took on another. Perhaps that's not as
difficult as I thought.

BLONDE:

④ What was he?

BRUNETTE:

⑤ A political man.

POLITICIAN:

⑥ Are you a Democrat, young lady?

BRUNETTE:

⑦ Of course.

POLITICIAN:

⑧ That's the spirit, my child. To what do I owe
this enthusiasm?

BRUNETTE:

⑨ Mother always votes Democratic. She says it
puts stew in the pot.

⑪ Blackout on Blonde

H Music faintly in
background.

⑫ Spotlight on
Politician, downstage
left

① "Naturally". (pause)
Waves arms accordingly when
speaking of "this great wonderful city
of ours." Stage left
wheels to face audience, as
on a soapbox.

② Leers after saying "tactics".

③ Turns to face Brunette.

④ She had remained nearly perfectly
rigid till this point, when she
perceptibly loosens up and
reassumes animation of
the "missionary nun" speech

⑤ Has been looking down,
listening. Brings up his
head slowly.

① Pompous, over-bearing, as if he were
making a speech in Madison Square
Garden. Stresses "important"
knowing it will have effect. He
cunningly lays it on thick.

② She did turn more firmly
toward him when he said
"important". Line is spoken
in complete innocence.

③ Stresses "intelligent", "tactics",
"you"

Last line - very offhand manner.

④ Do not have these lines sound
naive. There is hope and idealism,
but with reservations

⑤ Somewhat amused, but only
for a fraction of a second.

POLITICIAN:

Naturally. Do you want to be a part of the great Democratic organization in this great, wonderful city of ours? You could be important in promoting patriotic fervor by handing out these messages of wisdom to your neighbors; you would be uplifting the welfare of this great nation of ours.

BRUNETTE:

I don't know too much about the party.

POLITICIAN:

It is not necessary, my dear. You seem quite intelligent. Just employ the right "tactics" and I am sure that you could get plenty of votes. Tell everyone of the great job the Democrats are doing in Washington.

BRUNETTE:

You mean I could go to Washington? I'd speak all over the country--to farmers, and factory people, doctors, and...

POLITICIAN:

Well, no, my dear. Not quite. Why don't you start

① Indicates surroundings.

② Voice assumes brief human quality, as he is drawn into an argument against his will.

③ With hands indicates dog, baby. Picks foot very slightly. Points to leaflets. Sits down at end of speech, as if waiting for his answer.

⑤ Extremely saccharine.

① This should not be said affectedly, but with simple, candid drama.

③ Should not sound like philosophy, but the workings of the mind of a simple, but perceptive girl, who is completely unaffected, lacks guile or real argumentative power. She is, however, persistent to reach the root without having to go thru so much difficulty in getting a simple, straightforward answer in return.

with leaflets and then we will see what is next.

3 Your country should be very important to you.

BRUNETTE:

1 This is my country; it has to be important to me. It's all I've got.

POLITICIAN:

2 Your country is very small; the United States is very large.

BRUNETTE:

3 Is it large? I always thought something was as big or small as someone saw it. I mean a dog to a baby is very large, but to a grown person is just an animal to be kicked. I haven't yet learned to understand why I live here. Will these leaflets explain why I live in the United States and not somewhere else...and, then, why living here it is most important to vote for the Democratic Party. That's all I want to know. When you give me the answer I'll work for you.

21 Colored lights
play about Set,
very briefly.

I. Music, very faint,
up and under from
here to Politician's exit.

① Returns politician's false smile, talking him out of what he was attempting. As she speaks, politician backs away from window, downstage left.

② Offended, but more hurt than real anger is manifested.

② Does not face mother, then towards toward politician for 4.

③ Cuts her off with a wave of the hand and sermonizing.

Voice lowers for last line.

③ Last line is rather reflective, for the mother.

④ Brunette turns away from window, facing audience. Descends two steps, seating herself at edge of step.

④ As if struck by her mother's last line, she stops perfectly still, and says lines with yearning in her voice.

MOTHER:

① My daughter ain't too bright, sir. Sure and she'd
be a great drag on your work, seeing as how important it'd be. Please find someone else.

②② Spotlight on
Mother; dims
on Politician, d.t.
J. Peel of thunder.

BRUNETTE:

② You didn't give him a chance to answer me. He
might...

MOTHER:

③ Don't be so naive. He would have given you a
crooked answer if at all. Your father were no
different, sweet-talkin' but niver doin' anything.
There's so few honest politicians, and
when you find one who you think is, he usually
drinks or has a couple of mistresses. So don't
you trouble yerself about politics--it's one of
the least perfect things.

②③ Dims on Mother,
up on Blonde.

BRUNETTE:

④ If something is least perfect, then something else
must be more perfect. I wonder just what could
be most perfect--that I would like to find.

① Still sitting, looking straight ahead when saying line.

② She again, does not face Blonde, but looks toward audience.

③ Walks two steps downstage, $\frac{1}{4}$ toward Brunette.

④ Face betrays fact that she's working out this conclusion in her mind.

⑤ Blonde, during retort, turns almost $\frac{3}{4}$ from audience.

⑥ Stands slowly, goes down steps one at a time, downstage left.

① After breathy quality of Brunette's speech, Blonde brings a sense of reality back with her words.

She sounds very unneurotic, realistic, down-to-earth.

② Brunette continues to answer, in her dream-like conversation.

④ This is not said in a pausing manner. It's said as if the revelation was just made to her.

⑤ Should sound like she's making a lot of sense.

⑥ Not snappy. Back to musing.

BLONDE:

1 Don't you know that everything is perfect when you're ignorant of it and only loses its shine when you can see through it.

BRUNETTE:

2 I'll bet murderers aren't really so bad.

BLONDE:

3 What's that?

BRUNETTE:

4 If priests are only out to convert Jews and take away children to the nunnery and political men like my father are really crooked, well, should murderers be condemned?--at least they're not covering up their motives.

BLONDE:

5 But you're not supposed to let everyone know what you're thinking. It's not the thing to do. You're supposed to put on a different face for everyone you know and try not to get mixed them mixed up or else you lose the game.

BRUNETTE:

6 Oh, I don't know if you're right. There's a poem I remember studying once. Let's see...

① Begins to recite.

② Blonde extends her hands in misunderstanding. Walks back toward ash-can, sits with back toward audience.

③ Continues reciting. Again, is speaking to audience, not directly to Blonde.

④ Opens door way onstage during last two lines of recital. Speaks line directly in profile, then continues down the steps, walking two feet beyond Brunette.

SW is a Salvation Army type, with brown offends, a big collar on her plain brown dress, and hair pulled back into a bun. Is momentarily aghast of attention.

⑤

① These lines have meaning for her.

③ Starts out in a louder, higher pitch and volume than she finishes up.

⑦ You can almost hear the trumpets playing. She has the vanity of a person who knows she's right.

⑤ For the first time, she really uses a direct, argumentative approach. Her ideas are beginning to take shape. However, she is not using fighting words, but is rather trying to present a differing opinion.

Human society is such that one must laugh
They try so hard.

BLONDE:

What double talk is this?

BRUNETTE:

They seek both knowledge and man
And often gain but one.
They must decide which shall be the beer
And which the champagne
And then thirst.

But no, the challenge to their egos must be met;
They must have both.
They seek the platitudes of compromise
And lose the end.
For the means attempt to close the parallels
But geometricall, my friends,
The cause is lost.

SOCIAL WORKER:

No cause is ever lost. Society can always heal
its wounds.

BRUNETTE:

I always thought it just licked them. You as
a social worker can lick Mrs. Gonzales' hurts
from now until Christmas, but you can never
heal the void her husband's death has left.
Instead of crying over something that's past,
I don't understand why you don't look to the
future--to those that live. Why fuss about
people that don't matter anymore? My life still
counts, and I want it to count for something
worthwhile.

(24) Lightning
flash.
(25) Dim on Blonde

K. Peel of Thunder

L. Music for Social
Worker in background.

(26) Spotlight on
doorway.

① "Look around you" - looks around walking two steps downstage right.

② Sits
Backs up steps,

③ Points finger to embellish her point. Her mannerisms exhibit spinsterhood.

④ Looks away from SW

① She is not preaching or sermonizing, nor making a speech, but rather speaking as tho' any listener would know that whatever she might say would be good and pure and very righteous. After all, she alone is speaking the truth.

② Still persisting to find the answer that will serve her ends. She is afraid of words, particularly if she can't define the ideas behind them.

④ Another belief is falling into place, where it can be later grasped and incorporated into one unifying principle. Her thoughts are sounding more conclusive.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Of course, dear, and I can help you. Right here there is so much to be done for your fellow man. Look around you and what do you see-poverty and corruption and moral filth. By following the laws society has laid down, your example may aid others in leading the good life.

BRUNETTE:

The good life. If I was so ~~sure~~ what is the good life and what is the bad life, maybe I could give myself to you. But I'm not sure. Why try to reform everything here when I can go somewhere else where this society you speak of is not so corrupt, and...

SOCIAL WORKER:

But every society is corrupt to some degree.

BRUNETTE:

I don't believe that. There must be someplace where one can live without ugliness or guilt. Perhaps life is a search for that paradise.

Facing downstage left.

① Her tone implies defeat. She honestly believes there is no hope for a person who believes in things like paradise on earth. She is almost pleading for the Brunette's soul, hoping to save it from the unknown, of which she too is afraid. "You have to live" - looks toward audience. "Forget" - back to Brunette.

② Stands with one leg on one step, the other leg on the next step. It is not the social worker who is personally causing the struggle now, but the viewpoint.

③ She imperceptibly worked herself several feet upstage left.

① The last line recalls her from pleading to the staid appeal of a common social worker. Humanity is replaced by charity.

② Her thinking is again staccato, but, all in all, logical in sequence. She offers a condition in the last line which she knows, or nearly knows, the social worker could not guarantee.

③ Trying to reason, but on a different level.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Paradise? There is no such thing as a paradise until you die. You are creating an impossible^{ideal} for yourself and if you try to pursue this...this fantasy, you can never be happy. You have to live in this society, in this world, not in another of your own creation. Forget this nirvana and come with me to solve the ills of our own world. Your dedication will be applauded if you give of yourself wholely and without adolescent reservations.

BRUNETTE:

I want to, but yet, something's missing. He said that I should be happy and you say I may never be happy. If I could be happy--now--instead of waiting for death--which you say is paradise--if you could assure me of this, then I will come with you.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Have I the right to guarantee you something as fleeting as happiness. No, that. *is only*

M. Sounds of lament.

②⑦ *Spotlight on Mother at window*

① Comes in unexpectedly, cutting into Social Worker's sentence, startling both. With Mother's vituperative speech, Social Worker turns and runs out downstage left.

"Don't trust" (must be timed perfectly) after SW is offstage.

wheels, stands, circles rail.

② Blonde again pulls scene back to a realistic level. She returns to position at curtain rise.

(walking up a step)
③ Brunette returns to position at curtain rise, standing however, speaking to audience and not to Blonde.

④ Blonde answers her directly, quickly.

① Mother's philosophy is all on one plane, and is therefore given almost in monotone.

② Blonde really has no difficulty making up her mind. When a thought occurs to her, she grabs it, refusing to disclaim it, because she fears she may not have a better one.

③ Brunette does not make conclusive statements. As these thoughts come to her, she accepts them and makes them more concrete by putting them into words.

④ Stereotyped thinking. Last line is smug.

MOTHER:

① ~~is only~~ something she can find at home, as part of the family. The family is the most important thing. That's what the book says...Don't trust them social workers, always prying.

BLONDE:

I've made up my mind. ^{stand} I'm going to be an actress.

② Then I won't have to be me all the time. That gets so boring. I can be lots of different people and no one will know the real me. Why don't you? ^{sit}

BRUNETTE:

③ No, I don't think so. When I find the real me, I'm going to stick to it. If you go through life posing and then die never knowing who you are, then what was the sense of living at all.

BLONDE:

④ No one ever knows who he really is. An actresses roles are more real to her than her own life. That's what they say.

②⑧ Dim on Social
Worker, ^(up. let) up
on Blonde.
N. Sound of light rain.

① With upstage leg on top step, Brunette loses temper for first time, kicking at the steps in her anger.

② Blonde stands fully for the first time as she retorts. After finishing lines, she spots Sensualist entering from downstage left.

③ Begins to sway, unconsciously, to rhythm of music.

④ Sensualist strolls casually onstage, leaning against podium arch. He is garbed in the black ministerial suit, but without collar or other identification with priesthood. He is wearing a soiled white sweatshirt and soft, beige sneakers. He swaggers slightly from drink, swinging a gaily-colored umbrella.

⑤ Backs up a step, towards stage left.

① For the first time makes a statement so definite that you know she means it, without reservation. Last line sounds as if it is quoted.

② Also very sure of herself.

③ Sort of a cry to the world, pleading, despairing.

⑤ Shy, suspicious

BRUNETTE:

I don't care who says what or why or how. Is anybody an authority on anything? I don't care what anybody says-- no one makes much sense to me and besides what I think is just as important as what anybody else thinks. Don't you know that he who follows a crowd will never be followed by a crowd.

BLONDE:

Okay, okay, think for yourself. See what happens.

I'm content watching someone else make my mistakes. You'll be crushed eventually. You can't live the way you're trying to live. People just don't live that way.

BRUNETTE:

People! People!. I just wish that there was one person, just one, who knew some of the answers.

SENSUALIST:

Good afternoon, ladies.

BLONDE:

Hello.

BRUNETTE:

*O. Sounds of an indulging
jazz piece are background
to thunder.*

*(29) Spotlight on
Sensualist, downstage
left.*

① Stands with hands on hips, disdainfully.

② Moves away a step from sail and shares scene with Brunette as Blonde has retreated behind handrail. During repartee, Blonde looks from one to the other.

③ after first line, Brunette assumes a I-know-you-type expression; Sensualist, seeing this, waves his finger in admonition, to wait until he is finished.

④ Takes hands off hips

⑤ Indicates by pointing to eyes, ears, mouth, rubbing finger tips and sniffing air. Movement made with left (upstage) arm.

He has been facing her.

⑥ Paces downstage right, ~~the~~ 3/4 to audience

① Her previous experiences have left her bitter. She expects the same type of answers from him. She is both attracted and repulsed, however.

② Taken by surprise.

③ Continued bitterness.

④ Sensualist in very theatrical in both his movements and speech, giving words an extra flourish.

⑤ Still suspicious, but less bitter.

⑥ He makes each sense like a poetic work of art.

⑦ Is unimpressed; wants to discover exactly what kind of man this is.

⑩ This should be spoken as T. S. Eliot's "Hollow Men"

① What's your offer?

SENS:

② My offer?

BRUNETTE:

③ You look like a salesman to me. Everyone's a
salesman of sorts. What's your line?

SENS:

I am a man of God. Ah, but wait a minute--

④ my religion has no dogmas nor theories. It is
beauty; it is fulfillment; it is life.

BRUNETTE:

⑤ What are the requirements of your religion?

SENS:

⑥ Sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.

BLONDE:

⑦ But what sect do you represent?

SENS:

⑧ The non-conformists.

BRUNETTE:

⑨ Who are your disciples?

SENS:

Disciples? My followers are the gay people, the

⑩ happy people, living together, defying convention...

my people are the free people.

- ① Sits down slowly, as if in anticipation.
- ② Continues looking downstage left.

④ Paces downstage right, facing in.

⑥ Movement here is very involved. First, looks down at outsketched hands, then raises eyes to the sky, then cocks ears as if listening. Breaks off movement suddenly before "I cannot..."

~~Hand movement~~

~~downstage right~~

① She is beginning to be interested.

② Same, probing monotonous

④ This boy has all the answers and comes back with them fast.

⑤ With trepidation.

⑥ Sudden transition from poetic to realistic speech.

BRUNETTE:

① The free people?

SENS:

Yes, freedom. Freedom of the soul. Freedom from

② the prison bars of the commercial man--man, the machine.

BLONDE:

You must have some sort of code if you're a

③ religious man. I don't even think I believe you have a religion.

SENS:

What greater religion is there than the individual

④ man, born, living and dead. That is an overpowering religious experience.

BRUNETTE:

⑤ Do you believe in conscience?

SENS:

I believe in my hands--they can touch the trees

⑥ of the forest. I believe in my eyes--they can see the beauty of a sunset. I believe in my

ears--they can hear the music of the wind and the symphony. I cannot believe in conscience.

Know who invented conscience?

- ① Brunette should come in just as quickly as Sensualist. It should be fast-moving from this scene to curtain fall.
- ② Gropes for non-existent handrail. When saying "Not Christ (points skywards)" and shakes his head.
- ③ Fast cut-in
- ④ ignores interruption and continues, haltingly, "How" wheels on Brunette.
- ⑤ Gets very excited, moves more toward center of stage. Looks from Brunette to Sensualist and then back again.
- ⑥ Cuts in impatiently. Speaks more slowly, now, looking back at his body.
- ② This is a drunkenly solemn announcement.
- ④ He hasn't yet decided to make prey of the Brunette, so his speech is less of a convincing argument than a point of information.
- ⑤ The voice of conscience, morality - chastising
- ⑥ Becoming more and more aware of him, as a sexual symbol.

BRUNETTE:

① Who?

SENS:

Not Christ, no, not He. Catholic philosophers and
prissy, dried-up old women. That's who. It's a
② weapon...

BLONDE:

③ A weapon?

SENS:

used by parents to keep their kids afraid and
submissive. How do you know you have a
conscience? Bet you don't know. You'd never
④ think you had a thing called conscience if
someone didn't tell you that one thing is good
and another bad...

BLONDE:

I don't think you should listen to him. You
⑤ were the one who talked about devoting your
life to something, dedicating yourself to a
cause. This doesn't sound like...

BRUNETTE:

⑥ Wait! I'm interested. Do you have any books on
your religion?

① Waves away her suggestion. Also shows up his speech as he becomes aware of her.

② Looks toward audience, putting fingers through her hair. Blonde retreats behind rail. On thunder, holds out hand, as if to see if it is raining.

③ Spotlight on priest, standing still upstage left entrance. After speaking line, he steps off platform and stands below stairway, $\frac{3}{4}$ from audience, facing Brunette. He curves around Sens. who stands completely still.

④ Follows Priest with her eyes, and body.

⑤ Makes $\frac{1}{4}$ turn toward audience to face Priest. Points at him.

⑥ Forces Sens. to look back at her.

① He is beginning to want to convince her of his way of life, aware of her potential.

② The answer she wants is starting to unfold. She is soul-searching aloud. Last line should be said almost in fear, as this happiness could slip thru her fingers.

③ He is again sermonizing, dehumanized.

④ Hooding; answering back

⑤ Accusatory.

⑥ Bombardment from all sides. He is focus of attention, for the moment.

SENS:

Nope. Our philosophy is a simple one--"Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die." That's the only way to live.

BRUNETTE:

Perhaps he is more realistic than the others.

He, more than anyone else, is living to die.

Idealists live for the sake of living. ~~alone~~

I've been too idealistic. If I should never live to see happiness--then why live? And what is it to die without living?

(30) Several flashes of lightning
P. Thunder more violent.

PRIEST:

But his way is not the right way to die. You must prepare yourself for death. There are no laws in his religion.

(31) Spotlight, upstage left.

BRUNETTE:

Mr. Gonzales never prepared himself for death.

SENS:

Your laws are the laws of a man-made church.

My laws are the laws of God's nature.

BLONDE:

You have no place ~~of~~ worship.

① Pace again increases, as he answers Blonde.

② Again draws attention to herself. She has been staring at Sensualist throughout previous reportage. She does not take her eyes off him.

③ He again focuses directly on her, and does not turn when Blonde speaks.

④ Blonde forces Sensualist and not Brunette.

⑤ Priest, facing Sensualist, stands rigid.

⑥ altho' his body still is facing Brunette, he turns toward Priest when saying "a black robe ..."

⑦ Whirls to face both Blonde and Brunette, outstretching his arms perpendicularly to encompass both.

⑧ Shifts gaze to Blonde.

① Fervently.

② As if she were asking her lover, What do you want from me?

③ Laughs gutturally, not out of humor, but rather from his choice of words.

④ Poesy inundates speech again. Attitude reflects opinion that god and religion, as the priest knows it, is a carrion of death.

⑤ as if the thought just occurred to him! Sensual in tone.

SENS:

① My soul is my prayer-book--not my lips.

BRUNETTE:

② What are my responsibilities?

SENS:

③ Be yourself.

BLONDE:

④ Her reputation?

SENS:

Her spirit is alive. No inhibitions, frustrations,

⑤ neuroses, psychoses. My God, it's normality.

That's enough for any reputation.

PRIEST:

⑥ But what of death?

SENS:

Death...death is but a finality, a black robe

⑦ draped about your shoulders.

BLONDE:

⑧ I think you should go away.

SENS:

⑨ No, come follow me.

BRUNETTE:

⑩ You're the one who told me about out there.

Isn't this our chance to escape--we wouldn't be

⑩ Looks upward, breathes deeply.

① cuts in

② Spotlight on politician, downstage right after speaking lines, he moves down right.
~~in diagonal line to down stage~~
~~left end of stage.~~
~~center of stage.~~

③ Follows Politician with her eyes.

④ Turns & address politician as he moves next to Priest.

⑤ Thrusts leaflets in front of his body.

⑥ Throws up hands.

⑦ Social Worker enters from downstage right, walks in curve until she is front of stoop. & stoop. Everyone turns to watch her. She faces Brunette.

⑩ is becoming ecstatic with the thought.

② Admonishing.

③ Defensive

④ Very facetious in last half of speech.

⑤ answers back.

⑥ Shouts lines

⑦ Pinches up face to give desired effect.

wandering or searching for something we couldn't

grasp--something there just isn't. I would breathe
pure air...

SENS:

unrestricted air...

POLITICIAN:

What about duty to your country?

BRUNETTE:

I was just born here.

SENS:

No one asks for birth. It's just the severing of

an umbilical cord. Does that severance make a

Democrat or a Republican? Are those born by

Caesarean the radicals? They must be. They're

not dutiful in delivering their income tax

deductions correctly.

POLITICIAN:

She might have been a party worker, a campaigner.

SENS:

But why? It's so much better to be insignificant

in one's insignificance.

SOCIAL WORKER:

Marriage is a sacred institution. You are flouting

(32) Spotlight,
downstage right.

(33) Spotlight,
downstage right.

② Smiles broadly for the first time, picks up mocking rhythm.

③ Looks slyly up at Brunette, enjoying the joke.

④ Very, very slowly, then, deliberately.

⑤ Voice lowers, almost inaudible.

⑥ Looking quietly at him, without passion.

⑦ Continues to present arguments.

① Mocking

④ Upset at the prospect.

⑤ Everyone should be staring up at her when the decision forms in her mind. She manifests determination and a certain relief that the ordeal is over.

⑥ He realizes that she has accepted his proposition, and he becomes gentle, wanting her to be sure that she is taking the right straw.

⑦ Quiet but determined.

⑦ that institution by going with him.

SENS:

① Marriage is sacred...

BRUNETTE:

② and mothers are sacred...

SENS:

But both are such damn nuisances sometimes,

③ aren't they?

BLONDE:

④ You wouldn't leave?

*Q. Sounds of falling
rain.*

BRUNETTE:

⑤ Yes, I think so. Yes, I will....Yes, I must.

SENS:

This life, this religion--it follows the

⑥ birds south in winter; it seeks the wheat

harvester in autumn; it climbs mountains in

the heat of summer...

BRUNETTE:

⑦ I am willing.

SENS:

⑧ There is no womb to which you can return.

① She raises her head higher. Her eyes widen with the wonder of her decision.

②, ④, ⑥ Each, in turn, kneels when he says his line.

③ $3/4$ to audience, facing three. Stands up to full height, very straight.

⑦ Immediately after "ape" swings up umbrella and opens it, turning to Brunette, and motioning her down the steps.

⑧ Walking down steps. She walks up to Sensualist, smiles, takes his upstage arm as he turns to face the audience and walks slowly off downstage right. Blonde watches for a moment, then turns, walks up steps, and thru doorway. Sudden quiet.

① Simple, enraptured,

②, ④, ⑥ Pleading!

③ Very strong and sober

⑤ Philosophical tone.

⑦ Raucous mockery.

⑧ Radiant, as rain streams down face

⑨ Desperate. The three are still kneeling, rigid

BRUNETTE:

① I want freedom.

PRIEST:

② God...

SENS:ICIA

③ I am God. She is God. You are not God.

POLITICIAN:

④ Your country...

SENS:

It is but land, sea and air. The world is yet

⑤ land, sea and air. What is the world--elements,
merely elements.

SOCIAL WORKER:

⑥ Society...

SENS:

⑦ Up from the ape?

BRUNETTE:

⑧ Sometimes happiness sneaks in a door you had not
known was open...

MOTHER:

⑨ Where ye be going, daughter? Where?

③④ Colored lights
revolve wildly
throughout set, until
③⑤

⑧ Peal of thunder

③⑤ Lights fade until
there is only a spotlight
on window.

⑤ Complete Silence

③⑥ Light dims
very slowly. hold
darkness.

CURTAIN FALL

Set is absolutely quiet. Kneeling figures are rigid.